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In the Matter Of:

J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER

CLASSIFIED TESTIMONY OF DAVID E. LILIENTHAL

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Meeting of the National Security Council, Committee

on the Super Bomb. Present: Secretary Acheson, Secretary Johns, Under Secretary Early, Mr. Lilienthal, Dr. Smyth, Gen. Burns, Mr. LeBaron, Mr. Fisher, Mr. Arneson, Adm. Souers and Mr. Lay, 10:15 a.m.--12:15 p.m., January 31, 1950, Room 216, Old State Building. (Memorandum dictated by David E. Lilienthal, January 31, 1950, 4:00 p.m.)

Secretary Acheson opened the meeting. He stated that the Committee had had one meeting, that there had been a certain amount of staff work, papers prepared and discussions by the members of the Committee; that it appeared to him that the proper procedure was for the members of the Committee to agree upon a recommendation, to be followed by a paper written by staff, after staff knew what members of the Committee were prepared to recommend. Secretary Acheson then said he had before him a paper which he said summarized the background. He said that it was not necessary to read the paper if the members of the Committee did not particularly desire this, that it would suffice to read the conclusions reached in the paper. He thereupon read the following:

"In the light of the foregoing considerations, the following recommendations are made:

"a. That the President direct the Atomic Energy Commission to proceed to determine the technical feasibility of a thermonuclear weapon, the scale and rate of effort to

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be determined jointly by the Atomic Energy Commission and the Department of Defense; and that the necessary ordnance developments and carrier program be undertaken concurrently.

"b. That the President defer decision pending the reexamination referred to in (c) as to whether thermonuclear weapons should be produced beyond the number required for a test of feasibility;

"c. That the President direct the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense to undertake a reexamination of our objectives in peace and war and of the effect of these objectives on our strategic plans, in the light of the probably fission bomb capability and possible thermonuclear bomb capability of the Soviet Union.

"d. That the President indicate publicly the intention of this Government to continue work to determine the feasibility of a thermonuclear weapon, and that no further official information on it be made public without the approval of the President."

Secretary Acheson then handed out a proposed statement which the President might make in conformity with paragraph (d) of the recommendations. The proposed statement is as follows:

"There has been much public discussion about a project for testing the possibility of a so-called hydrogen or super bomb. The democratic process requires that the

g-3 people of this country be informed in an orderly manner of decisions which are being made which affect their security.

"It is part of my responsibility as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces to see to it that our country is able to defend itself against any possible aggressor. Accordingly, the Atomic Energy Commission has been directed to continue with the development of all forms of atomic weapons. This work includes a project looking toward a test of the feasibility of the hydrogen bomb. Like all other work in the field of atomic weapons, it is being and will be carried forward on a basis consistent with the over-all objectives of our preparedness program.

"It is important that this project be viewed in its proper perspective. No preparedness program can rely on any single weapon. This is all the more true of a weapon which, given the agreement of others to effective international control, we propose be banished from national armaments. Furthermore, no preparedness program, no matter how effective, can do more than provide the shield behind which we persevere in our struggle to foster the idea and the reality of individual freedom and human dignity. Our sense of dedication must be directed to the pursuit of an honorable course and to the strengthening of the free world, for there is no short cut or easy way to security or to international peace and justice."

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Secretary Johnson then commented on Secretary Acheson's proposal. He said that the Defense Establishment was in agreement with the recommendations; they had two suggestions to offer. One was that Recommendation b. be eliminated. Recommendation b. reads:

"That the President defer decision pending the re-examination referred to in c. as to whether thermonuclear weapons should be produced beyond the number required for a test of feasibility."

Secretary Johnson also submitted an alternative draft of statement for the President to make. It is much briefer than the one proposed by Secretary Acheson; a copy was not supplied to me but it was read aloud.

Secretary Acheson said we appeared to be in agreement; should we not see if we could compose the differences between the two proposed public statements.

Mr. Early said he recommended that the statement be made by the President in the form of a hand-out by Charles Ross rather than at a press conference. Secretary Johnson agreed, saying that the thing to do was to play it down, make it just one of those things. Mr. Early further said that the last paragraph of the State Department version seemed better left off. Secretary Johnson thought the first paragraph better be omitted and that we should add something from the statement he recommended about continuing this

E-5 development until international agreement was reached. I urged that a sentence be added strengthening the idea that it was not only international agreement that was involved, but a reexamination of our whole position, so I wrote out the following: "We shall also continue to examine all those factors that affect our program for peace and this country's security." The words I prepared were accepted. I also suggested that the statement say that the President's direction related to continuing work, rather than give the impression of suddenly beginning something wholly new. I proposed amending the sentence as it originally read in the State Department draft from: "Accordingly, the Atomic Energy Commission has been directed to continue with the development of all forms of atomic weapons. This work includes a project looking toward a test of the feasibility of the hydrogen bomb." to "Accordingly, I have directed the Atomic Energy Commission to continue its work on all forms of atomic weapons, including the hydrogen bomb." This was accepted.

In its approved form the recommended statement by the President read as follows:

"It is part of my responsibility as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces to see to it that our country is able to defend itself against any possible aggressor. Accordingly, I have directed the Atomic Energy Commission to continue its work on all forms of atomic weapons, including the

so-called hydrogen or super-bomb. Like all other work in the field of atomic weapons, it is being and will be carried forward on a basis consistent with the over-all objectives of our program for peace and security.

"This we shall continue to do until a satisfactory plan for international control of atomic energy is achieved. We shall also continue to examine all those factors that affect our program for peace and this country's security."

At this point I asked an opportunity to express my views, which was afforded me.

I began by stating that I was under no illusion about the limited value or effect of advice to the President from me, when it conflicted with a recommendation agreed to by both the Secretaries of State and Defense. Nevertheless, my reservations about the course recommended, in some important respects, were so great that I felt it necessary to refer to them very briefly. Following is my recollection of my remarks.

For three years, since the beginning of the Commission, I had made efforts to have the Commission function in the spirit and the letter of a law providing for civilian control of atomic weapon development. The statute provides that the President annually should determine the rate and number and kinds of weapons produced. Annually the Commission and the Secretary of Defense transmitted jointly to the

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President a memorandum on this subject which the President approved, and which thereupon became the Commission's directive. At no time was the Commission supplied with any of the information or views of the Military Establishment upon which the Military recommendations had been based. Therefore the Commission at no time examined into the underlying assumptions and the policies and plans of the Military Establishment in respect to the necessity for or the adequacy of the number of weapons provided for and the rate of their production. I did not think this represented a serious issue, except in the abstract, up to the time of the expansion program proposal of last spring. The reason this is so is that saying that we needed everything that could come out of the spigot was so obviously right that no examination of assumptions was required.

When the expansion program came along last spring and summer a different situation appeared. The President himself directed that the assumptions underlying this proposal be examined into by a special committee of the National Security Council, consisting of the same members as of this committee. (See letter to Adm. Souers from The President, dated July 26, 1949.)

But this move to examine into the military assumptions and policies did not succeed. I said the reasons why it didn't succeed were not particularly relevant at this

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juncture.

The proposal for accelerated research and development toward a thermonuclear weapon, however, presented a clear case where the underlying assumptions, policies and plans of the Military Establishment to provide for our defense needed to be examined independently if there was to be substance to the principle of civilian control of atomic weapons by the Commission. If a military conclusion could not be examined into and was not examined into independently by the Secretary of State, the Atomic Energy Commission, and of course by the President, but was regarded as the whole answer to the ultimate question, then this definitely removes any notion of civilian participation in a fundamental policy question.

A beginning of an examination of military assumptions, policies and plans for the security of the country by members of this Committee, and by staff has been made in the past weeks. I stated as my opinion that this represented substantial progress. I stated that the recognition that the Secretary of State as well as the Secretary of Defense had a right and a duty to examine into these assumptions and see if they furthered our overall national purposes was an important outcome of this whole consideration of the super bomb.

Accordingly, I thought Recommendation c. was an

important element in this whole matter; namely, a real inquiry into the basic question: what is the best way to further the common defense and security, to which questions as to our atomic bomb programs and the plans for their use, and the thermonuclear development are subsequent.

I said moral questions, questions of the utter frightfulness of this weapon, questions of again seeking international control -- all are relevant but none seem to me the central questions.

A principal misgiving and grave reservation about the wisdom of the recommendation to proceed forthwith, and without more, with the thermonuclear research at an accelerated pace, and proceed prior to this all-important reexamination of our present course was as follows: that I felt that such a direction by the President, prior to that reexamination and perhaps re-setting of the course would be highly prejudicial to the examination itself. I recognized that the atmosphere of excitement resulting from a further delay of a decision of the President would not be the best atmosphere in which to function. I was, however, impressed, in my own mind, with the counter consideration: that the atmosphere resulting from the conditions under which to conduct the examination and would probably make a new approach to the atomic weapons race impossible. The injury to vital concerns affecting our security and our position in the world

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and to the likelihood of a searching objective reexamination, outweighed in my mind the troubles inherent in the course of taking a new look first.

The central question seems to me not whether we should build the super bomb or not build it. Rather we should first face up to weaknesses in our present national position and not threaten by a decision now what might be the last chance to adopt a less certain course of danger. The decision to proceed before exploring those weaknesses and see what we could do about them might well mean we would not later be able to face up to them, or we just would not face up to them, or facing up to them would come too late. I admitted that the weaknesses I saw in our present course might not be confirmed by such a hard new look, or might be even worse than I feared. But unless we faced up to them as a principal problem, they would plague our future Secretaries of State and Secretaries of Defense, Chiefs of Staff, and Presidents and bear them down with perhaps overwhelming problems; whereas if perhaps faced up to now they were not unmanageable.

The decision recommended here is to proceed now to "augment to the greatest extent possible the effort devoted to (super-bomb) research" and to proceed with a test in 1952 as a target, that is a test "at the fastest practicable rate." The disadvantages of this course that I see are of

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several characters. First the act of directing that this proceed can not be minimized by mere statements such as we recommended to the President. It is too great an act for that. It is more eloquent and meaningful than any words that accompany it, or any speech saying it means this or that.

The act, I feared, would be widely regarded as a confirmation in the clearest possible terms of our present chief and almost sole reliance upon this kind of armament against the Russians.

It seemed to me that the present course of having, as General Bradley indicated, virtually nothing else but the atomic bomb that we could use for the defense of Europe today, or in the near future, is clearly a weakness; we would hide from ourselves the existence of that weakness by magnifying and redoubling and multiplying our efforts along the same course, a course that seems to me highly doubtful of value today.

I stated that in my opinion we are today relying on an asset that is steadily depreciating for us, i.e. weapons of mass destruction. The President's decision would tend to confuse and, unwittingly, hide that fact and make it more difficult to find some other course.

The act of going ahead would tend to provide a false and dangerous assurance to the American people that when we get this new gadget "the balance will be ours" as

12 against the Russians. As evidence in support of this, I cited two kinds of witnesses. One, the Joint Chiefs of Staff in their paper dated January 13, 1950, Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, Subject: Request for Comments on Military Views of Members of General Advisory Committee. See Pages 9 and 10 for example as follows:

"(4) QUESTION: Would known possession of the super bomb grossly alter the psychological balance between the United States and the USSR?

COMMENT: They believe it would, and, further, that the balance would be grossly in favor of the United States until such time as the USSR had developed a stock pile of super bombs.

(5) QUESTION: What effect did announcement of the Russian explosion have upon the feeling of security of the American public?

COMMENT: The Joint Chiefs of Staff are informed that this is a question now under highest priority study by the Central Intelligence Agency. So far as the responsibilities of the Department of Defense are concerned, the Joint Chiefs of Staff are of the opinion that the American public now feels less secure than prior to their knowledge of Russian possession of atomic capability and that the public expects the Department of Defense to take action necessary to regain the favorable balance previously held."

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I do not believe it is clear at all that the assumptions here implied are justified.

I referred also to comments of leading members of the Congress during the past week or so. These comments include those of the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and of the Minority Leader Senator Wherry. They show that assumptions will be drawn from proceeding with this development which I do not believe are justified, and I fear will make more difficult a facing up to the wasting and dwindling value to this country of weapons of mass destruction as the principal basis of the defense of this country and of Europe.

I said I was concerned that the act of going ahead, far from strengthening our defense or atomic program, would magnify its weaker aspects. These aspects include such matters as (1) the value of A-bombs since September 23 to deter or to prevent Russia over-running our European allies; (2) the impact of the decision to proceed, on the feeling of the inevitability of war, and therefore weakening the basis of our present course, which is there will be no war soon.

At this point I interpolated that the present assumption of this Government is clearly that there will be no war with the Russians in the immediate future, that is to say in the matter of two or three years. If this is not a sound assumption, if the assumption is that war is likely in

g14 the next two or three years then the question of proceeding with the H-bomb is an easy one; but more important than that we should be getting ready for war, whereas at the present time we are not getting ready for war. I said we ought on that assumption to send my son back into the service; we should be really taxing ourselves; we should stop the making our pleasure automobiles, etc. etc.

But this is not the assumption. The assumption is that we are not going to have a war with the Russians in the next few years. Therefore why can we not spend a few months for an intensive and realistic reexamination of the worsening of our position as the result of our preoccupation with atomic weapons. It seemed to me that this was a far wiser course than to make a decision, prejudicing the reexamination and, I feared, making it increasingly difficult if not impossible to face the realities, or to take another course that might save the world from the fury of the atomic arms race and the tension between the USA and USSR.

It seems to me that unless the assumption is an early war we have the time to realign our policies and ought to do nothing to make that realignment more difficult or perhaps (as I believe) well-nigh impossible.

I said there were other weaknesses in our present course which I feared the decision at this time might make harder to correct.

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Thus, we take a position as a nation that atomic weapons should and must be eliminated. But our military leaders are depending almost entirely upon atomic weapons in the event of war. This kind of contradictory position is not merely a defect of reasoning, a faulty argument. It is a positive danger to continue both those courses at the same time. To go ahead on a new cycle of atomic weapons, the super, might well make it more difficult for that defect to be faced and something done about it.

The net of my reservation about this recommendation therefore was this: the decision to proceed forthwith, with nothing more, may be, and I fear will be to miss an opportunity to reexamine and realign our policy, a better opportunity than may ever appear again to better our security and promote something better than a headlong rush to a war of mass destruction weapons.

Following my statement, Secretary Acheson said that he found little in what I said with which he would disagree. He said, further, however, that it still did not offer an alternative that appealed to him, that he felt that the pressure for a decision was so great, that the discussion and feeling in the Congress had reached such a point that to defer the decision to this purpose was an alternative that he could not recommend. Secretary Johnson apparently agreed. We must protect the President he said.

6 We then proceeded to a discussion of the recommendations themselves. Dr. Smyth suggested to me that Paragraph b. which the Secretary of Defense urged be left out, should be retained. His point was that b. left in tended to justify and strengthen the idea of a reexamination. Secretary Johnson said that he felt b. was not needed and that he had other objections (which he didnot explain) to it. It was stricken out.

Paragraph c. directing thereexamination of objectives was then discussed. It was pointed out that in the paper presented by Secretary Acheson the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, my successor, was omitted from the group. The reasons for this the Secretary of State stated were several. He said there was first of all the obvious difficulty of working with a five-man Commission in a matter of this kind. The second point was that to have the Commission on the same level as the head of a Department might seem inappropriate. Third, that the Commission's function was actually related to the technical aspects rather than the issues that were the subject matter of this direction. Admiral Souers pointed out that this reexamination would involve discussion of strategic war plans, and the whole field of our world relations. Secretary Acheson added that our relations withthe Russians were now in a worsening condition. The inference I drew from this discussion was that this

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participation in basic policy examination was regarded as rather remote from the functions of the Commission as conceived by the other members of the Committee. Secretary Acheson asked my opinion about the omission of the Commission. I said that I would defer to Dr. Smyth's opinion on this since I was practically out of office, and it was a matter of direct concern for my colleagues and my successor. With this qualification I stated that I was in agreement with the five-man Commission point was a good one; that the problems of the Chairman of the Commission or the representative of the Commission serving as a co-equal with individuals who are the heads of their departments and could speak for them was a real and substantial difficulty. Secretary Acheson said there was the further difficulty that under the law and the Commission's practice the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy was kept informed by the Commission on almost a day-to-day basis; that the inclusion in the Commission of this study would doubtless require that the current investigation into this matter be supplied to the Joint Committee while the discussions were tentative and even though they included matters of the utmost secrecy; this was a major objection. I said that I could not agree that this was a real point; that he thought the five-man Commission point could be worked out but that the Joint Committee problem was a real one in this kind of a situation. Admiral Souers concurred

18 about this Joint Committee phase of the matter. Secretary Acheson said further, however, that it would be his purpose and intention to consult on technical matters with a technically qualified member of the Commission, presumably ; Dr. Smyth. Furthermore he said that specifically the General Advisory Committee to the Commission or members of that Committee would certainly be consulted, particularly since they had taken a strong and critical view about our present policies in this whole matter.

Secretary Johnson then recommended that we go to the White House at once and get a decision. He said he already had an appointment at 12:30 and we could use that. He said the heat was on in the Congress and every hour counted in getting this matter disposed of.

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CROSS EXAMINATION

BY MR. ROBB:

Q May I ask you, sir, do you take shorthand?

A Yes.

Q So I assume you made shorthand notes on this meeting.

A I do take shorthand and I did take notes.

Q The recommendations A, B, C and D, had you seen, or been told about those before they were read by Mr. Acheson?

A No. The general tenor of the discussions didn't make this a surprise, but I had not seen the recommendations.

Q Had you consulted with them about what they might be?

A With Secretaries Johnson and Acheson?

Q Yes.

A My recollection is rather unclear on this. We only had one meeting with the two Secretaries as I recall. That was in that same week. I am not very clear on that.

Q Were those recommendations in accord with your views?

A No, they came closer to my views in the light of these reservations I have expressed than the final recommendation, because they did imply that there would be a reexamination of our whole situation in connection with this undertaking. The reason this recommendation comes closer than would appear on the surface is that this

recommendation seemed to me to be not the accelerated all out crash program that had been considered, but something less than that, an accelerated research and development program with a test, rather than a crash production program. That seemed to me to have some merit. These recommendations I was prepared to go along with for whatever importance it had, which was not very much, if there could be a really strong statement about a reexamination of our weakened general military and diplomatic position.

Q You were in accord with recommendation B, were you not, that the President defer decision pending the reexamination referred to in C, as to whether thermonuclear weapons should be produced beyond the number required for a test of feasibility?

A No, I think not. My preference would certainly have been that the President would have instituted a reexamination without doing more than having the Commission continue its research and development program. That recommendation B is considerably short of that.

Q Considerably short looked at one way; another way it goes considerably beyond what you thought you ought to do, doesn't it?

A Yes.

Q In other words, you thought you ought merely to reexamine the situation without going ahead with the program,

is that right? That is, the thermonuclear program?

A I thought a continuation of the program that I have described here, including the so-called "booster" which is a classified code name, this is the 25 times the Hiroshima bomb, plus and continuing the pace on the research and development work, while a real look at what Korea made us look at whether we like it or not would have been the best program at the time for the reasons stated. I did not underestimate the difficulties of following up a program in view of the great commitment of the H bomb at that time. I thought it was important that some one state what the other side --

Q In other words, what you were for was continuing research, but not going ahead with a thermonuclear program beyond that, is that right?

A I think the word "crash" program comes as close in shorthand of what I thought we should not institute. That in fact is what was instituted. A research program carrying the super development along would not require any public announcement, which it was quite evident the crash program would.

Q Were you in favor of going ahead with the program to the point of testing a thermonuclear weapon?

A I don't know that alternative was ever open.

Q Did the program which you envisioned and which you favored include a test of thermonuclear weapon?

A The view I expressed here was that before that kind of decision is made that we take a look at the effectiveness of our whole military and diplomatic situation and repair that as part of a further weapon program. If that further weapon program required an H bomb, that would be another matter. But we could not decide it under the circumstances of having made a profound public decision to go ahead on a crash program of the H bomb. I am afraid that events rather confirmed that. ; A reexamination, although there are some indications in this statement, will be made, a reexamination was not made.

Q So you were not in favor prior to what you describe as a reexamination of embarking on a program which would lead to a test of a thermonuclear weapon, were you?

A I was not at this time in favor of a crash program, that is right.

Q No, sir, that is not my question, Mr. Lilienthal. Is my question not clear to you, sir?

A Obviously a test would be required in a crash program. I think this makes rather clear that I thought it was unwise to embark on to accelerate the program, including a test, until we had seen whether the program we then had and our gneral starving of the rest of our military establishment was not a dangerous thing and should not be corrected. I think that is as near as I can come to answering

it.

Q Were you in favor of any program, whether you call it a crash program, or what, which would include a test of a thermonuclear weapon?

A Not at that time.

Q That is what I wanted to get.

A This is a preliminary to any such program.

MR. GRAY: May I interrupt a minute?

(Discussion off the record.)

BY MR. ROBB:

Q Mr. Lillienthal, I notice on page 3 of your memorandum, you refer to the discussion of the language of the President's announcement. You say, "I proposed amending the sentence as it originally read in the State Department draft from: 'Accordingly, the Atomic Energy Commission has been directed to continue with the development of all forms of atomic weapons. This work includes a project looking toward a test of the feasibility of the hydrogen bomb.'"

You favored changing that to, "Accordingly, I have directed the Atomic Energy Commission to continue its work on all forms of atomic weapons, including the hydrogen bomb."

You eliminated the reference to a test, didn't you?

A No, I was assuming --

Q Did you say no?

A Let me explain. I was assuming that the

recommendation of the President would be as joined in by the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense. I was trying to strengthen that statement by a portion of my views which are included in this statement. But I did make clear to the other members of the Committee that I thought before we did anything, this stern reexamination of our picture should be taken.

Q Yes, but the language which you wanted included in the statement eliminated any reference to a test, didn't it?

A Yes. I thought I made that clear.

Q Now, you refer to "to continue its work on all forms of atomic weapons, including the hydrogen bomb." Just what work were you doing on the hydrogen bomb?

A There has been over a period of years work in the theoretical division of the Atomic Energy Commission or the Los Alamos Laboratory, and this was directed toward the rather considerable problems of making a bomb which would be based on the ignition of hydrogen, tritium and so on, a bomb described in a public document and usually referred to as the hydrogen bomb. That work was going on. The details of it I am not familiar with, but it was certainly being carried on from the first contact I had with the Commission.

Q That is what I am asking you about, Mr. Lilienthal. What were the details of the work which you referred to in that statement, "to continue its work on the hydrogen bomb".

Just what was being done?

A I have to refer to the records on that but there was a program of investigation of thermonuclear reactions.

Q Yes, you said that before. But what I am getting at is precisely what were you doing? How many people had you working on it?

A I don't know.

Q How much time had they spent?

A I can't answer that and couldn't precisely at that time. The records are available. It was part of the work program of the Los Alamos Laboratory and it was reported from time to time.

Q If I told you, Mr. Lilienthal, that the record showed that there was comparatively little work that had been done or was being done, would you dispute that?

A No, comparatively little compared to the other programs that were approved, I am sure that is true.

Q I will reframe the question. If I told you that the records show that there was little work that had been done, would you dispute that?

A Yes, I think I would. It covers a long period of time.

Q Now, referring to page 4 of your memorandum, you say, "At no time was the Commission supplied with any of the information or views of the Military Establishment upon which

the Military recommendations had been based. Therefore the Commission at no time examined into the underlying assumptions and the policies and plans of the Military Establishment in respect to the necessity for or the adequacy of the number of weapons provided for and the rate of their production."

By that did you mean that you didn't have much information about what the Military was doing or what they wanted?

A No. The reason for their wanting it. They said, "We want X amount of material in this next year." The Chairman of the Commission on behalf of the Commission underwrote this as a conclusion as if we had an opportunity to examine the reasons for that conclusion of the Defense Establishment. We didn't have that information. What we did was to sign jointly with the Secretary of Defense a statement of what the program the President should follow.

Q Were you privy to the plans and needs of the Military?

A No, we were told what their requirements were, but we were not supplied the information as to the basis of that.

Q On page 5 of the memorandum, you say, "I said moral questions, questions of the utter frightfulness of this weapon, questions of again seeking international control -- all are relevant but none seem to me the central questions."

What did you mean by moral questions?

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A The question of the effect in a cold war sense or a psychological war sense of engaging in a program of bombs of unlimited size on the views of the United States taken by friendly or by now friendly countries. The moral position of the country, I suppose, is a short way of putting it. This was relevant, but I didn't think it was central.

Q You did in this memorandum, Mr. Lilienthal, take issue with the military judgment of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, didn't you?

A I certainly did.

Q Did you consider your self to be qualified to do that?

A No, I considered I had to express my independent view that we were in a weakened condition based on General Bradley's statement. May I quote the essence of what he said to us which he said publicly in November 1950. This is by no means critical of General Bradley. I am just indicating the shock it gave me. He said, " It is a bruising and shocking fact that when we Americans were committed in Korea we were left without military strength with which to face any enemy at any other specific point. Certainly we were left without the strength to meet a general attack. In the military sense the free world was left without adequate reserves except for the atom bomb."

When General Bradley said that to us upon questioning, it seemed to me important as a public servant

and a layman to express great consternation and concern that this country was in that condition and that something effective should be done about it, even though that involved changing the economy program and redrafting of men. This was in, as you recall, or these meetings were in the end of January 1950. The 25th of June the Korean war broke out, and we then found the condition we were in. I don't have any notion that I have military judgment, but I have a feeling that when the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff makes a statement of that kind in a proceeding in which I have been asked by the President to express my honest opinion, I have to express the opinion of great concern.

DR. EVANS: Did he make that statement publicly in Chicago?

THE WITNESS: He did make that in November, 1950, to the Executives Club.

BY MR. ROBB:

Q Was there any question at the time you had this meeting that the Joint Chiefs of Staff wanted to go ahead with the H bomb program?

A Yes. At the time of this meeting late in January the Defense Establishment, speaking through Secretary Johnson and presumably representing the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, did want to go ahead with the crash program on the H bomb. It was my unpleasant duty, since the

President asked me to express my honest opinion, I said I thought until we got our whole situation in order, this was an unwise course.

Q May I ask you, sir,,do you have any further comment on this memorandum before we go into so-called open session?

A Just one, and it may be off the record. As I hear this read over the gap of four years, it sounds pretty pretentious. But this is the situation when one is asked to explain his opinion as a layman by the President of the United States, he has to express the views he has. It does sound as if I was setting my judgment up against the judgment of other people. I have no apologies to offer for that except that was the pickle the President put me in putting me on this committee. I must say if the question is, was the decision at the time wise or not, I don't know. I am not a sufficient dogmatist to say that the decision that was taken was wrong. I am not a sufficient dogmatist to say today that my view point was right. But this is the way it looked to me then.

MR. GRAY: I have just one question which perhaps can be asked when counsel for Dr. Oppenheimer returns, but it is suggested by something in this memorandum. I guess this is in the President's statement. This section C or the proposed statement. This is on the first page. That is the President direct certain things to be done "in the light of the probable fission bomb capability and possible thermonuclear

bomb capability of the Soviet Union."

Perhaps I can just expose this and then we can discuss that later on. I will want to ask a question later on about your views as to the possible thermonuclear bomb capabilities of the Soviet Union. I suppose we can do that without reference to this memorandum. In other words, you have discussed this aside from anything that took place in this meeting, is that correct?

THE WITNESS: Yes.

DR. OPPENHEIMER: Since my counsel is absent, may I ask one question of the witness?

MR. GRAY: Yes.

DR. OPPENHEIMER: Do you recall General Bradley's comments at the joint meeting of the General Advisory Committee on October 29th?

THE WITNESS: I have a recollection of a comment he made.

DR. OPPENHEIMER: Well, counsel is back. It is relevant to what we have been talking about.

MR. GRAY: You may answer that.

MR. ROBB: When counsel come back, you can ask them that question.

DR. OPPENHEIMER: It was in the substance of his comment, and I am not sure that can't be answered.

(Discussion off the record.)

(End of classified section of Lilienthal testimony.)